Provident Fund Dues in Orissa

250. SHRI SANATAN BISI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an amount of Rs. 8 crores, 12 lakhs and 40 thousand is due on account of Provident Fund in Orissa, as reported in Oriya daily "Samaj" dated 27.8.97; and

(b) what action has been taken against the defaulting owners?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M. P. VERENDRA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Necessary legal action has been initiated to recover the dues outstanding against 14 defaulting establishments. In the remaining six cases recovery proceedings have been stayed by the Hon'ble High Court.

Meetings of Tripartite Committees

251. PROF. RAM KAPSE:
SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the Ministry-wise number of Tripartite Committees now in existence;

(b) the number of meetings held by each Committee during the last three years and number of members who attended the meetings;

(c) whether it is ensured that the decisions taken in the meetings of these Committees are implemented;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether Government propose to review the working of the Committees entrusted with the work of over-lapping nature?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M. P. VERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (e) The information is being compiled and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Complaints against Hike in Monthly Contributions Under the ESIS

252. SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a communication in February, 1997 complaining against hike in monthly contributions recovered from the labourers/workers and increase in the salary limit upto Rs. 6500/- p.m. under the Employees State Insurance Scheme;

(b) if so, the action taken in this regard; and

(c) if no action has been taken, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M. P. VERENDRA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Labour Ministers' Conference of major States in a meeting held on 4.10.1996 recommended enhancement of the wage ceiling for coverage under the ESI Scheme from Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 6,500/- per month. The Conference also recommended enhancement in the rate of contribution from 4% to 4.75% and from 1.5% to 1.75% of the monthly wage to be recovered from the employers and employees, respectively. The ESI Corporation also endorsed the proposals. The Central Government accepted the recommendation and enhanced the wage ceiling under the ESI Scheme from Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 6,500 per month with effect from 1.1.1997. The rates of contribution were also accordingly enhanced. A notification in this regard was issued by the Government on 23.12.1996. As the ESI Scheme provides a comprehensive social security and its benefits have now become available to 11.01 lakh additional workers, no further action in the matter is considered necessary.

Welfare of Beedi Workers in Orissa

253. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the approximate number of people in Orissa who earn their livelihood by plucking tendu leaf and making beedis;

(b) whether Government are aware of the problems of those Beedi workers;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken for the welfare of those workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M. P. VERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

National Policy for Ocean Development

254. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any national policy for ocean development in existence;

(b) if so, the details and salient features thereof; and

(c) if not, whether Government are considering formulation thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGENDER K. ALAGH): (a) Yes, Sir. The Government enunciated an Ocean Policy Statement in 1981 in order to address the national priorities in the field of ocean science & technology.

(b) A statement is annexed (*See below*).

(c) Question does not arise.

Statement

The oceans are known to be our last frontiers. Our long coast and the sense of adventure of our ancients fostered a great maritime tradition. The Indian Ocean which washes our shores provides opportunities which need to be utilised. For success in ocean development, the entire nation should be permeated by the spirit of enterprise and the desire to explore the frontiers of knowledge. Our experience in other fields of scientific endeavour will help our efforts in ocean development. What is necessary is a policy and structure to facilitate a dynamic thrust, keeping in view developments in other parts of the world.

The adoption, by an overwhelming majority of nations of the Convention of the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea has established a new international order for the oceans. This extends the economic jurisdiction of coastal states to an area ranging from 200 to 350 miles from the coastline. According to his regime, nearly 2 million square kilometres of area, or very nearly two-thirds of the landmass has come under India's national jurisdiction. In this area, the exclusive right to utilise living and non-living resources vests with the nation. Besides, India has been recognised as a "Pioneer Investor" in ocean mining. This gives India the exclusive right to operate in an area of upto 150,000 square kilometres in the high seas for the recovery and processing of polymetallic nodules.

For ages, the sea has enabled our people to sail to near and distant lands and has been a source of livelihood to large numbers of people. Even now Indian public and private enterprises do use ocean resources. The country is producing significant quantities of fish and hydrocarbons from the sea and much scientific work has been done in collecting basic knowledge and information about the sea and seabed and in surveying, charting and exploiting it. Progress has also been made in construction and development of offshore structures.

The vastness, complexity and uncertainty of the ocean environment calls for a co-ordinated, centralised and highly sophisticated development response. This should be based on adequate knowledge of marine space (sea-bed, water and air columns included) as a fundamental prerequisite to the control, managment and utilisation of the rich and varied natural